



ACC.15

TCT@ACC-12 | innovation in intervention

A888  
JACC March 17, 2015  
Volume 65, Issue 10S

## Heart Failure and Cardiomyopathies

### TRAVEL EXPERIENCE IN PATIENTS ACTIVELY SUPPORTED BY LEFT VENTRICULAR ASSIST DEVICE

Poster Contributions

Poster Hall B1

Saturday, March 14, 2015, 3:45 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

Session Title: Advances in Heart Failure Therapies: From Diuretics to VADs and Transplant

Abstract Category: 14. Heart Failure and Cardiomyopathies: Clinical

Presentation Number: 1146-218

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**Background:** Left Ventricular Assist Devices (LVADs) are being implanted with increasing frequency in patients with advanced heart failure in an effort to restore functional capacity and improve quality of life. It has been shown that patients suffering from advanced heart failure are significantly limited in their ability to travel. The purpose of this study is to describe the impact of LVAD therapy on patient's ability to travel.

**Methods:** Patients previously implanted with the HeartMate II LVAD were asked to complete a questionnaire designed to ascertain the impact of LVAD therapy on travel. All patients were consented prior to participation.

**Results:** Fifty patients have been implanted with the HeartMate II LVAD in our center since 2009. At the time of the study 31 patients, currently on support (17) or previously supported and subsequently transplanted (14) were available for participation. A total of 27 patients (87%) representing a cumulative 12,860 days of support completed the questionnaire. Patients reported travelling by plane, automobile and train. When asked the number of times they travelled while on LVAD support the median response was 2-3. The average distance travelled per trip by car was 300 miles; the furthest distance travelled by car was 2000 miles. The furthest single distance travelled by plane was 3600 miles. One patient reported traveling over 20,000 miles, predominantly by flight, over a one year period during LVAD support. On a scale of 1-10, with one being too inconvenient and ten being no inconvenience, the mean reported by patients was 8.2, or little inconvenience. Minor inconveniences cited included airport security, handling equipment and feeling unsure of traveling with the LVAD. Overall, when patients were asked if their travel experience was better, worse, or the same after LVAD implantation 14 out of 19 (74%) reported the experience as the same or better.

**Conclusion:** Patients on active LVAD support are able to travel utilizing all means of commonly available transportation with only minimal inconvenience. Compared to advanced heart failure patients not treated with LVAD therapy this represents a substantial improvement in functional capacity and quality of life.